

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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IDEALS.

Angels of Growth, of old in that surprise
Of your first vision, wild and sweet,
I poured in passionate sighs
My wish unwise
That ye descend my heart to meet,—
My heart so slow to rise!

Now thus I pray: Angelic be to hold
In heaven your shining poise afar,
And to my wishes bold
Reply with cold,
Sweet invitation, like a star
Fixed in the heavens old.

Did ye descend, what more were ye than I?
Is't not by this ye are divine,—
That, native to the sky,
Ye cannot hie
Downward, and give low hearts the wine
That should reward the high?

Weak, yet in weakness I no more complain
Of your abiding in your places.
Oh, still, howe'er my pain
Wild prayers may rain,
Keep pure on high the perfect graces,
That stooping could but stain!

Not to content our lowness, but to lure
And lift us to your angelhood,
Do your surprises pure
Dawn far and sure
Above the tumult of young blood,
And starlike there endure.

Wait there,—wait and invite me while I
climb;
For, see, I come!—but slow, but slow!
Yet, ever as your chime
Soft and sublime
Lifts at my feet, they move, they go
Up the great stair of time.

—*David A. Wasson.*

ALL THINGS ARE YOURS.

"All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."—1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

This world of God's belongs most, not to him who, as men call it, "owns" most of it, but to him who has most knowledge of it and most love for it. It is not,—of all this varied, teeming earth,—it is not what you can carry in your hand or pocket or title-deeds that you make really yours; but it is what you take into your mind and heart, what you know and what you love. That which you carry in your fingers you can carry only a little way; and then the fingers loosen, and your grasp relaxes, and it all slips from you. But that of God's great world which you gather into mind and heart, that does not slip away: that becomes part of your very self, and goes with you into all the life that is to be.

The same thing is true of the world of human life. Of course there is no question of actual ownership: that is past. But yet the very same law comes in: the world of human life is most his who knows it best and loves it best. Go forth into the busy world and love it, interest yourself in its

life, mingle kindly with its joys and sorrows, try what you can do for men rather than what you can make them do for you, and you will know what it is to have men yours better than if you were their king or master. Looking through history, whose, most of all, is the world's? Not Alexander's or Napoleon's. They tried to make it theirs; but it was only a brief hold they got, and then all fell utterly from their grasp. No: the one who most of all has inspired men with a passionate feeling of being "not their own, but his," is Christ. So deeply did he awaken that feeling—"we are not our own: we belong to Christ"—that later ages imagined a sort of actual purchase, by his substitutionary sacrifice; but it was nothing of the kind really: it was simply the response to his great love. And what was true in the large of Christ making men his is true in little of every one, or may be true. He whom you bind to you by love becomes, as far as it is possible, yours.

And so of making the wise, the great, and good ours. They belong to the mind and heart. Shakespeare's plays do not become yours by your owning a handsome copy of them, but, again, by knowing them and loving them. Beethoven and Mendelssohn are theirs who love and understand them. So true is this that John Ruskin has pleaded that in works of art it is wrong to claim any private property or ownership. The beauty, the great thought, that which gives the marble or canvas its value, that cannot be bought: that only comes by knowing and loving, by looking on the beauty till its lines grow into the mind, and loving it as one loves some greater friend; and that love can never be selfish.

And so of things greater than art and the æsthetic. So of character and the deep qualities of life itself. You cannot buy these things: you cannot pay a master even to teach you goodness or uprightness or purity. I do not say that the teachers can do nothing: *knowing* here, too, goes for something; but it is *loving* that does infinitely the most. The quality you love becomes a part of you. Your friend's nobleness, if that is what you really love in him, gives you also some touch of nobleness. You may never have much opportunity for heroism; but if, as you read of some brave, heroic deed, your heart throbs with deep,

loving admiration, that love, by subtle chemistry, transmutes the deed into your character. Not the whole of it, but some touch of it, becomes a part of what you are.

Here, then, are two ways of making one's own the field of nature and the world of humanity and the realms of art and beauty. These different ways of having and using—higher and lower for the body and for the mind—really mingle and interlace; and they ought to do. We need something of the lower ownership, something for the bodily use, or else the mind and the soul will not be here long. The beautiful will not keep us alive. One even admires the winter's winding-sheet of snow better if one has an overcoat and thick boots. A man may have both uses. He may have great possessions for this world, and use them so as to be the richer for all worlds.

It comes to this: we do not need to revolutionize all the common ideas of property, but to let men see how little way down into realities those common ideas and the words that stand for them go. The world should be taught to see that this whole common idea of property—as if it were the solidest reality, and for which they are so apt to grind and slave and give their very life—is, after all, only a life interest, and that not the best interest or the highest. And so should we all see how large a part of the finest use and treasure of God's world is free to all. It is only the poorer, temporary uses,—good in their way, but merely temporary,—it is only these that are so limited. The higher, lasting uses are for all that will live the open, loving life. It is not what we carry in our pockets that makes us most truly rich, even though it be in gold or diamonds. The open eye to see the beauty that is in earth's poorest place; the thoughtful mind to watch the world's life and change and growth working together; the interest in books, so as to absorb their rich, warm life into one's mind; the large heart, to look on all around with tender, loving sympathy, feeling their joys and sorrows, and having one's single life multiplied, as it were, a hundred-fold by interest in others,—these things are what make man's being rich and full and quick with the promise and power of greater life to come. So I think we should look around us in this world, even in the poorest corner

of it, with a royal sense of privilege and blessing,—a feeling like that which breathes in this old word, that “all things are ours.” So all things are,—sunshine and storm, the flowers, the glistening, innumerable stars, the solemn mountain heights, the vast domain of history, the lofty ideals of art and music and poetry, the rich human interest of life about us, all good and wise and great ones, earth’s noblest uses, heaven’s glorious hopes, things present, things to come,—yes, all are ours.

“And we are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s,” wrote Paul. Yes, all good things gather to the highest. All earnest, outward life looks upward still, leads upward. The life which feels this happy, royal sense of richness as it looks around, feels all the blessing brighter and more precious as it looks above; and earth’s use and joy culminate as, with Christ himself, we catch the sense of a higher belonging yet, and see all resting in the ever-enfolding light of eternity and God.—*From “Sermons of Courage and Cheer,” Brooke Herford.*

THE STILL HOUR.

The quiet of a shadow-haunted pool,
Where light breaks through in glorious tenderness,

Where the tranced pilgrim in the shelter cool
Forgets the way’s distress,—

Such is this hour, this silent hour with Thee!
The trouble of the restless heart is still,
And every swaying wish breathes reverently
The whisper of thy will.

Fountain of Life, in thee alone is Light!
Shine through our being, cleansing us of sin,
Till we grow lucid with thy presence bright,—
The peace of God within.

If, in our thoughts, by thee made calm and clear,
The brightening image of thy face we see,
What hour of all our lives can be so dear
As this still hour with thee!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

When you come down from the summits,
you do not come away from God. There is no task in life in which you do not need him. The work-bench needs his light as truly as the cloister.—*Phillips Brooks.*

The heart has some reasons which reason does not know.

The glory of a life is in the quantity of devotedness to God, in the fidelity with which the simplest thing is done, in the quantity of the higher life that can be thrown into the lowliest duty or the humblest position.—*J. F. W. Ware.*

The Ideal Life,—what is it but the realization of our own oneness with the Infinite, and the helping others to realize theirs, showing what *can* be done through our own living and loving, and by our words bearing witness to the Eternal Verities?—*Selected.*

We think of heaven as something that must visit us from afar. . . . But the new heaven and the new earth will only be the unveiling to us of what already is. It is only our blindness that needs to be removed, only our spiritual faculties that need to be awakened.—*Lucy Larcom.*

How easily we lose poise, swept by the currents of life! Our root is not deep enough. Consider the lily resting on the face of the waters, its roots far below. How serene it rides the ripples, and how confidently it has sought the light, that its life may expand therein above the turbulence of the waves!—*Trinities and Sanctities.*

A soul in which the spirit of a divine purpose is at flood glorifies everything it touches, enhaloes every place and act, lifts the meanest thing to be divine, sends the thrill of its energy through the dullest, puts life into that which seems death. Such a soul transfigures, if it may not transmute, everything it comes in contact with.—*J. F. W. Ware.*

Oh, could I . . . transport thee direct from the beginnings to the endings, how were thy eyesight unsealed, and thy heart set flaming in the light sea of celestial wonder! Then sawest thou that this fair universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed city of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every living soul, the glory of a present God still beams.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.]

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the first request.

"Janice Meredith"; "Shakesperian Reader"; "Memoirs of Mrs. Anna Jameson"; "Into the Unknown World"; "The Last Leaf," O. W. Holmes; "Ca Ira! Danton in the French Revolution"; "The Pedagogues"; "Social Evolution," Kidd; "Little Men," Louisa Alcott; "Sweet Clover"; "Robinson Crusoe"; "Children's Life of Lincoln"; "Story of Massachusetts," E. E. Hale; "Tale of Two Cities," "Christmas Carol," Dickens; Tennyson's "Poems"; "Cranford"; "The Schönberg-Cotta Family"; "Elizabeth and her German Garden"; Shakespeare's "Tempest"; "Wonder Stories of History"; "The Whittier Year Book"; "Fairies and Other Stories"; "Twice-told Tales," Hawthorne; "Oliver Twist."

The following books are offered by the Second Church Branch, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass. Reference required with first request. "Primary Arithmetic," Randall McNally; "Normal Union Arithmetic"; "The Altar at Home"; "Fireside Education"; "Sonnets and Lyrics," T. B. Aldrich; "Poems," D. A. Brown; "Poems," Lydia Sigourney; "Lalla Rookh," Thomas Moore; "Young Woman's Guide," W. A. Alcott; "Young Wife"; "Fern Leaves," Fanny Fern; "Ladies' Wreath"; "Mother's Assistant"; "Autobiography of an Actress," Mrs. Mowatt; "Friendship's Offering"; "Oracles of Shakespeare"; "Robert Elsmere"; "Concerning Isabel Carnaby";

bound volumes *Godey's Ladies' Book*, 1843, 1844; *Strand*, 1896, 1898, 1899; *Munsey*, 1899, 1900; *Metropolitan*, 1899, 1900; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 1899, 1900.

REQUESTS.

[Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado.) 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

My husband is a farmer; and I have four children, aged thirteen, eleven, nine, and five years. I would be very grateful to the kind friends for something especially suited for the three oldest, all boys. Boys are harder at this age to entertain at home, and I wish mine to grow up good and useful men. If some one would send me the *Ladies' Home Journal*, I would be grateful. Mrs. Annie J. Brown, Hearseford, North Carolina.

Mrs. M. C. Andrews, Grady, Indian Territory, asks for "Tempest and Sunshine" and "John Halifax" for herself and anything suitable for her four children, ages from thirteen to eight years.

I live on the mountain and in a very sparse settlement, and have a large family of little children, the oldest just eleven. I am a farmer's wife, and we are not able to buy reading matter. Any kind of magazines and books that will interest little boys will be so gladly received. Mrs. Ada V. Wann, Glenzaida, Alabama, Jackson County.

Mr. J. H. Isbell writes: "Let me introduce to you an invalid girl of about twenty years, of good Christian character and fond of reading. I visited her some weeks since; and, oh! I wish I could command words to

picture to you her condition. You could not give reading to a more worthy object. About twelve years ago she was stricken down with rheumatism, and has not walked one step since. She can write or knit with her hands in her lap, but cannot raise them to her face, not even to feed herself. She lives with her father and mother back in the Brushey Mountains of this county, fifteen miles from any town or railroad. She and her family are poor, very poor. Hoping some of *The Cheerful Letter* friends will remember Miss Dora Reid, Draco, North Carolina."

The books and magazines sent me have been a great pleasure to me and others, as I have loaned and given away all that has been sent to me. I will be glad of some books and papers suitable for myself and husband and children. I will be glad of a calendar for this year, and some scraps, if any one has any to dispose of. I enjoy the Mothers' Council and sermon in *The Cheerful Letter*. Wish they were longer. Mrs. George Brown, Verano, Patrick County, Virginia.

I wish to thank the kind *Cheerful Letter* friends for the papers I have received. As soon as my family reads them, I pass them on to others, with the request that they in their turn will give them to some deserving friends. So they go until worn out. The papers have proved a blessing this winter during the severe storms we have had, especially to the friends on farms when they were "snowed in." Will some one kindly send me the *Youth's Companion* and the *Household* or, if impossible, any reading similar? Mrs. Edward A. Clark, Summer Street, Brewer, Maine.

Mrs. Minnie McJunkin, Pikeville, Tennessee, thanks *The Cheerful Letter* friends for reading sent, and asks that more be sent her, also to her sister, who is fond of reading and would be thankful to get any good books and magazines of any description. Ollie Smith, Pikeville, Bledsoe County, Tennessee.

I desire to thank, through the columns of this dear little paper, the kind friend who sends me the precious little *Cheerful Letter*, which I so greatly enjoy. I find there some of the most beautiful reading matter I have ever seen. I also desire to thank sincerely

those who have from time to time sent me and my little grandchild, Mary E. Moseley, books and magazines. We are both so fond of literature, and unable to purchase anything of this kind. Her father has been an inmate of the asylum for eleven years. I would be so grateful to any one who would send me a small Bible, or Testament, about the size of a small Prayer-book; also, Moody and Sankey's "Gospel Hymns," from 1 to 6, with music. Earnestly praying God's richest blessing upon you all, Mrs. M. A. Miller, Box 18, Smithville, Charlotte County, Virginia.

Miss Musie Morgan, Athens, Texas, would be glad of any magazines or novels.

Mrs. Nannie Shelton, Verano, Virginia, living in a lonely place with four children, the oldest eight years, asks for reading matter.

Mrs. P. Watson, Ansonville, North Carolina, asks for a United States History, Harvey's First Grammar, Second Geography, and Webster's Dictionary. Mrs. Watson is the mother of six children, and anxious they should have an education.

If I could write you what is in my heart to say, you would all understand how your kindness in writing, in sending books, in the helpful reading of *The Cheerful Letter*, all have been so welcome, and, more even than that, have assured me there is a helpful spirit in true Christianity that, if put in actual practice, would make even this world an Eden. "It is the letter that killeth" too often in the guise of philanthropic work in our churches. Here, in our far-away home, are many who have not been enlightened, but by their simplicity of mind are very slow to take in anything new or different from "our father's way." The children of these parents, when opportunities for rational belief are offered them, would, in the near future, be instrumental in bringing about at least a more ethical course of conduct. And now, my dear sisters, comes in the best possible opportunity, —if in our Sunday-school (we have only the Methodist church here in our vicinity and a very small Sunday-school) we could introduce reading along strictly ethical and moral or religious lines, free from sectarianism. I find myself often at a loss how to

place a great part of the reading I have received, particularly magazines. Many people in the South look upon light reading, or a novel of any description, as "trash," and do not wish their children to read anything of the kind, curiously blind to the fact that the continued story in the weekly paper, if they take one, is a "novel," and not always of a religious character. I have culled very closely, often, to make up a package that would not only interest the youth of the family, but also escape the adverse criticism of the parents. I could use to such good advantage books that have a purpose and a high tone, inculcating high principles: "Black Beauty,"—of which I never keep a copy long,—"Faith Gartney's Girlhood," the only one of Mrs. Whitney's stories we have, and a favorite because it teaches while one reads. School is now ended. Seven months' vacation too often takes away what desire may have been awakened for study. Good reading, well chosen, will do so much to mould the character of a growing girl or boy. Biographies, History, Travels, etc., all would come most fittingly for distribution during the summer. I say distribution, for practically it is that. Many lose sight of the fact that the book is to be returned. After several years' experience, I find, under the circumstances, it is better to just send a good book afloat from reader to reader, with the added gain that occasionally one hears of one having stranded in some particular remote corner, where, indeed, it must be a God-send. I will only add, then, to this already too long letter, my cordial appreciation of all the good that has come to me through your kindly interest, as also of those letters which I would be glad to have opportunity to answer more promptly. Believe me, I answer them many times in spirit, and often, when busily employed, "think out" what I will write when at leisure, only to find myself incapable of even that much physical exertion. Susan T. Lisk, Conner, Marion County, Florida.

On February 5 last I had the misfortune to lose my left hand, which was blown up badly with dynamite caps. I shall lose the use of it for life. This will account for my not answering my dear friends' letters before. As I can do nothing but read now,

please forward me reading matter as it will be most thankfully received and duly appreciated. My post-office is changed to Crystal Springs, Montgomery County, Arkansas. We moved here to take our children to a good school. Mrs. Zara L. Cotton.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[Contributions for this department may be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, 26 Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

The mother is the continuous measure of her child's possibilities. So far as she realizes this, she will understand that her educating agency in the premises is not a matter of supervising the affairs of the household. Personality is the only thing, after all, that counts much in education; and it is the baptismal energy of his own mother's personal pressure that will alone render to the child the requisite service. One of the things for which I shall be profoundly grateful clear into the next world is that I attended public school but two terms before I was twelve years old; and I should not have been sent then, had it not been that one of those terms the school was taught by my mother and the other by my father.

My father was a farmer; and my mother, with four children on her hands and no hired help, attended to all the work naturally pertaining to a farmer's wife. Her days were long,—that was before eight-hour laws were agitated; and one reason why they were so long was that she devoted herself to her children and to their initiation in the rudiments of character and education, declining to farm us out to the questionable moral supervision of nurses or to the equally questionable mental discipline of tutors or the public schools. My mother had the exceedingly old-fashioned notion that children were born of mothers in order that they might have mothers to take care of them and bring them up. There is a good deal of the flavor of the Bible and of New England about that way of estimating the matter, but it does not appear that any more modern inventions afford much in the way of improvement. Substitutions for divine arrangements always fall a little short of being a success. There are some mothers that, even under the peculiar social conditions of our

own decade, still take the same sort of care of their offspring that mothers used to do; and it is ordinarily not difficult to see that the validity of the method is attested by the quality of its issue. There are certain families, that it would be easy to designate by street and number, where the entire personality of the mother exhausts itself, in the production and maintenance of a home atmosphere and in building up the physical, intellectual, moral, and religious structure of her offspring. In such cases there may not be many monuments erected after the mother's death, nor lengthy array of published obituary; but a true mother lives for her children, and knows no other ambition but to live in her children. She aims at nothing more than unrecognized survival in their manhood or womanhood, and asks to be monumented only by the activities and fidelities of those to whom she has given life and who are her own life prolonged and perpetuated.

It is with all this in view that I have ventured to say that the crying need is for better mothers. It is sometimes claimed that any ameliorating effort, in order to be thorough and radical, must expend itself upon the children. I should rather say that there is no so direct way of bettering church and state as to raise the tone of motherhood. If society depends for its character upon the home, and the home depends for its quality and power upon the mother, then what so deep and fundamental work can be done as to seek to create sentiment in this direction and to encourage among the older and younger members of her sex the conviction that a girl's discipline, physically, mentally, and morally, be conducted with close reference to her presumed destiny as wife and mother?

Talks to Young Women, Chas. H. Parkhurst.

NATURAL HISTORY.

ANTS' NESTS AND ANTS.

Everywhere in our walks we come upon ant-nests. They are in our paths, in the fields, and the woods. Even in the cities we see ants running over the sidewalks, and, if we follow them, find their homes near some grassy space, if not in it. There are ants that cut out nests in solid wood, in decayed

wood, in bark; that make homes in chinks and crevices of rocks; that tunnel under flat stones; that live in the walls of our houses; that build nests of mud or clay in trees; and even build nests of leaves. But most ants live in the ground, where they tunnel out cells and galleries as they please, making their nests larger and more extensive every year.

Some of these nests show merely a small hole in the surface of the ground. Others have domes above the entrance, some flat and some high and rounded. If we could find a way to enter, we should first pass through a narrow gallery into a central cell, dark of course, with smooth earth walls and floor, and with many other galleries leading out of it in different directions. Keeping on, we should find these galleries opened into other cells. Some cells have no other outlet, but many have more than one. There will probably be eggs or larvæ in certain cells; in others, pellets of earth from newly dug galleries, which will all be carried out of the nest later. Nowhere is there any dirt or refuse: it is all taken carefully out of the nest to quite a distance. Even dead ants are borne away and buried.

If we follow each gallery to the end, we may find one or two leading far away to some deep room or to a distant entrance, or perhaps to another ant-hill which we had not imagined connected with the first.

But why do ants need so many cells? some one may ask. They are needed that the eggs and young ants may have, in one cell or another, just the right temperature to develop them. Ants must have moisture and warmth for this. The eggs are brought into the upper cells when these are warmed by the sun. If these become too hot and dry, the eggs are all carried into cells a little lower down, and in the very lowest cells the eggs are safe from either excessive heat or cold.

The household of an ant's nest is made up of two or three sorts of ants. There are the male and female ants. They are the largest of the household and have wings for flight. We seldom see these except when they "swarm," as bees do, in very hot weather. The ants we see running around everywhere, and without wings, are called "workers." They build the nests, provide the food, take care of the others who cannot

take care of themselves, carry about the eggs and watch over them, and manage the nest generally.

In the spring there are usually only workers and eggs to be found in the nests. As the eggs hatch out, part of the young ants develop wings, while others do not. Those with wings swarm and fly away from the nest. But the workers always manage to secure one or two queens, or females, at this time, and take the greatest care of them and of the eggs they lay. If they did not, an ant-hill would soon die out; for ants are not thought to live more than three or four years, and Forel even thinks they do not live more than one year after they are full grown.

Among some species of ants, part of the workers have very large, strong heads. These are called "soldier ants," and their duty is to protect their own nests and make war on others. All nests do not have these soldiers, and the workers must do any fighting that is required.

If you look at any ant, you will see that the body is divided into three parts. There is the triangular head, then the thorax, and lastly the abdomen, usually armed with a sting. Each part is marked off in rings, or segments. The first segment of the head bears the two antennæ, or feelers. The second segment bears the two mandibles. With these mandibles the workers do their digging. When they keep them closed, they form a sort of pointed trowel, with which they scrape the earth and roll it into pellets, or balls. When open, the mandibles serve as pincers to hold or carry anything with. Their inner edge is sharp and usually toothed, so they can be used to cut or saw with by moving the head from side to side. The legs and wings are attached to the thorax, or second section of the body. The first pair of legs are used in digging, and the others also help in throwing the earth back beneath the body.

In planning their work, ants do not seem able to consult with each other. One ant begins a cell or gallery that she thinks should be made. At first she works alone. Finally, as the work begins to take shape, another ant will seem to see what is intended to be done, and will join the work. Others then take hold, and at last it is impossible to tell which ant first began the

work; for all show an equal interest and ardor.

S. Minns.

WHERE THE GREBE SKINS COME FROM.

In a Washington street-car the other day I counted thirteen grebe skins on women's hats, and I am sure Washington women are no more partial to these ornaments than the women of other cities across the whole breadth of the continent. The beautiful silvery skins with rich brown borders are becoming so fashionable and being worn by so many thousand women that the question arises, Where do they come from?

Last summer my work took me among the grebe hunters of the lake region of Eastern California and Oregon. In this half desert region of scattered stock ranches, where great, shallow, alkaline lakes with wide borders of tules fill the bottoms of the valleys and the country seems fitted especially to be a home for wild things, vast numbers of grebes have for centuries built their nests and raised their young. Their only enemies were the mink, otter, and other wild foes that experience had taught them to cope with. Even the Indians left them unmolested, preferring ducks and their eggs as food. So the grebes were secure in their homes until fashion claimed them.

Over most of the country the grebes are known only as migrants, when they are so wary and so expert in diving that they are well prepared to take care of themselves. But on the breeding-grounds all is different. As I waded among the tules in the shallow margins of Tule Lake, California, last summer, the grebes followed close after me or, diving, came up again only a few feet away, cackling and scolding as they tried to drive or coax me away from their island nests, which were floating among the tules, boldly offering their lives for the safety of their homes. Often, as I stopped to examine the hastily covered eggs in the damp cup of the floating nest, the old birds would rise noiselessly from beneath the water by the side of the nest, and sit motionless on the surface, watching me with their bright red eyes full of anxiety. Or, as I surprised a brood of little black downy chicks among the tules, one of the parent birds would swim fear-

lessly up to me to attract my attention, while the other hurried the chicks out of sight into the tules or swam rapidly, with them clinging to her feathers, out into deep water. The three species of grebes breeding here, the Western, the Eared, and the Dab-chick, though belonging to different genera, are similar in habits. They are miniature loons, graceful, soft-tinted, silvery-breasted water sylphs, fitted only for inhabiting the water or the air. Harmless, beautiful, defenceless, they fill the place among birds which the fur seals do among mammals; and their doom seems as sure and as sad.

While among the nests, watching the brave, beautiful little people building and guarding their homes and caring for their young, I could hear the guns of the skin hunters along the shore of the lake all day; and I was told that from early spring till the lakes freeze in fall the destruction goes on, though most successfully during the breeding season. The birds are shot, the skins of the breasts are stripped off, dried flat, and packed in gunny sacks. They bring the hunters twenty cents each; and I was told that several thousand were shipped from Klamath Falls every week through the summer, and that the hunters often make twenty or thirty dollars a day.

Shall we appeal to these rough, untaught men to desist, to give up the rich harvest they are reaping? It would be as useless as to appeal to the unthinking women who decorate themselves with the innocent breasts. The State laws do not protect these birds, because they are not considered game. A few years more, and there will be no need of protecting them: they will be where the egrets, pigeons, and the buffalo are,—in our memories.

Vernon Bailey, of Department of Agriculture, in Bird-Lore.

THE CHILDREN'S BIRDS.

The little Welcomes think that all the birds on Beacon Hill ranch are under their care. Donny and Bee are too small to do much except to love the birds and look at them; but Bebe and Ben help about the nests, and also help take care of the birdlings when they are hatched.

In nesting time, Bebe and Ben are very busy. They lay soft feathers and wisps of

hay where they think the birds will see them. They place bright-colored strings in sight for the orioles to get and weave into their hanging nests. They put up all sorts of odd receptacles about the house and sheds, hoping the wrens will choose them to build in.

Last year two orioles built in a cotton-wood tree near the kitchen, and used quantities of the blue crochet cotton which the children had hung out on the kitchen window-sills. The nest was very pretty,—it looked like a gay purse.

A pair of wrens took possession of an old tea-kettle which Bebe had hung upon the low branch of an apple-tree. All the rough, coarse twigs for the nest were carried into the kettle through the curved spout. The little hollow at the bottom, where the eggs were to be laid, was lined with cotton from the cotton-wood tree. If any of us swung aside the lid of the kettle to take a peep in, the birds vanished like steam up the spout, and waited in the branches overhead for us to go away.

Another pair of wrens built in a toy watering-pot which the children had hung by the handle in a back shed. The birds went in and out of the shed through a knot-hole in the floor. Six baby wrens were reared in that tiny watering-pot; and Ben and Bebe were kept busy in picking them up and putting them back, after they had grown to be such big youngsters that the whole half-dozen would topple out if but one arose to stretch himself and flap his bit of wings.

At one of the chamber windows the children had a good time watching a pair of beautiful brown thrushes as they built in the piazza vines. A pair of wood-pigeons used to come pattering along the piazza roof to look, too,—to learn something of nest-building, perhaps; for they soon began one for themselves in a plum-tree near. They had made friends with the children on their visits to the piazza, and, when the baby pigeons came, were quite willing to have Ben and Bebe get up in the plum-tree and feed and pet them.

The children think they understand the "words" of the different bird-songs. They maintain stoutly that the robins on the lawn say "Cheer up"; that the quails call each other by name, "Bob White," as they

run along the drive; that the meadow-lark in the hedge, who wears a yellow cravat with black bands, says, "A pretty bird"; that the swallows in the shed, cry, "Say, will you?" and that the wrens trill forth, "Have a—happy—little heart!"

Beacon Hill ranch abounded with wild pastures and wild walks where all kinds of native flowers grew thick, each expected and welcomed in its season; and all-day basket picnics take place all summer long. But for the children there are no "doings" on the ranch that ever furnish the excitement and joy awakened every spring by the arrival of the different birds, the choosing of the nesting-places, and the coming forth of the hungry little birdlings from the beautiful eggs.—*Little Folks.*

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all contributions for this column to Miss K. C. Porter, 22 Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass.]

I.

Charade.

A dear little girl, one bright summer day,
Out on the lawn sat working away.
My first she was making in handkerchief
white;
"And it must be finished," she said, "before
night."

At present she wore from her dear auntie
May,
Something she'd wanted for many a day.
I saw how it shone on her wrist, white and
fair,
Held fast by my second, I now must declare.

As pretty a maiden as ever was seen,
She was, as she sat 'neath that tall evergreen.
To kiss her fair cheek there, now and then
stole

A little sunbeam through the leaves of my
whole.

II.

Enigma.

What force or strength cannot get through
I with a gentle touch can do.
And many in the street would stand,
Were I not, as a friend, at hand.

III.

U o a o, but I o thee
O o n o o but o o me.

Let not your o a o go,
But give o o I o thee so.

IV.

Pi.

A ridieb thwi a leylow ilbl
Pohepd puon het dinwov ills,
Kodecc ish hsingin yee nad dsia,
Atni ouy hsmad, oyu lspeey aedh?

V.

Conundrums.

1. Why is a ladylike and agreeable girl like one letter in deep thought, and then on its way towards you, and then bearing a torch, and then singing psalms?

2. What word is shorter by having a syllable added to it?

3. Which is the most difficult train to catch?

4. Why are your nose and chin always at variance?

Answers to Puzzles in April Number.

I.

Hidden Animals.

1. Rat. 2. Pig. 3. Horse. 4. Lion. 5. Jackal. 6. Hare. 7. Dog. 8. Bear. 9. Ass. 10. Goat. 11. Beaver. 12. Lamb.

II.

Charade.

Come — pass, — compass.

III.

The letter E makes the sentence, "Persevere, ye perfect men: ever keep these precepts ten."

IV.

Progressive Numerical Enigma.

1. Handsome. 2. Together. 3. Pleasure. 4. China. 5. Forget.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

Like many other members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, the Editor is usually interested in the communications to the Mothers' Council. Possibly some of the ends of this department might be better served if it were called "The Mothers' Club," so that any or all the mothers who read *The Cheerful Letter* might write freely to the

paper, expressing their opinions or narrating their experiences.

It has struck her, in reading the quotation from Dr. Parkhurst in the present number, that the doctor cannot have heard the famous conundrum, "Which was created first, the egg or the hen?"

Dr. Parkhurst, in recommending that "the tone of motherhood" should be "raised" rather than that "ameliorating effort" should be expended upon the children, forgets that in training the children we are training the mothers of the next generation (and the fathers, too). If the mothers of our country need "ameliorating," is it not well to begin with them as early as possible? Is not a child who is trained to good habits, and has good ideas instilled into him (or her) from the first, at least *likely* to be a better parent and a wiser teacher and guardian of children than if left to chance until mature age? We need not neglect to do all we can for men and women; but those who have tried it know what an advantage it would be to have caught them young!

We incline to refer the advantages of Dr. Parkhurst's early life partly to his mother's influence, but partly also to the wholesome conditions of the typical New England country home. Several children, little money, no servants; the boys and girls all expected to exert themselves and take a share in the work of the house and the farm. The ways of living were simple in the New England farm-house. Children were early taught to be independent,—independent of the care and attendance that they receive in the families of the rich.

But there are many families who need directly the opposite counsel to that given by Dr. Parkhurst. Mothers are *too* self-effacing instead of being not self-effacing enough. And, setting aside for the present the question of the boys, if it is right for the mother to have no life but in her children, then it must be right for the daughters, when they in their turn become mothers, to follow the same principle. In this way all the women of the human race, except the unmarried, are effaced, as individuals.

While writing, a little article by Col. Higginson has occurred to me, which I have sought, and now quote from. He says:—

"A woman should no more merge herself in her child than in her husband. Yet we

often hear that she should do just this. What is all the public sphere of woman, it is said,—what good can she do by speaking and writing and action,—compared with that she does by properly training the soul of one child? It is not easy to see the logic of this claim.

"For of what service is that child to be in the universe, except that he, too, may write and speak and act for that which is good and true? And if the mother foregoes all this, that the child, in growing up, may simply do what the mother has left undone, the world has gained nothing. In sacrificing her own work to her child's, moreover, she exchanges a present good for a prospective and merely possible one. If she does this through overwhelming love, we can hardly blame her; but she cannot justify it before reason and truth. Her child may grow up with talents unlike hers or with none at all.

"Or the special occasion when she might have done great good may have passed before her boy or girl grows up to it. If Mrs. Child had refused to write 'An Appeal for that Class of Americans called Africans,' or Mrs. Stowe had laid aside 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' or Florence Nightingale had declined to go to the Crimea, on the ground that a woman's true work was through the nursery, and they must all wait for that, the consequence would have been that these things would have remained undone. The brave acts of the world must be done when occasion offers, by the first brave soul who feels moved to do them, man or woman. If all the children in all the nurseries are thereby helped to do other brave deeds, when their turn comes, so much the better. But, when a great opportunity offers for direct aid to the world, we have no right to transfer that work to other hands, not even to the hands of our own children. We must do the work, *and train the children, besides.*"

The address of Mrs. Francis E. Young is changed from 292 Lincoln Street, Worcester, Mass., to 32 Kilby Street, Boston, Mass.

The address of Mrs. Marly Jones is changed from Kincaid, Kansas, to Kingfisher, Oklahoma.

Will those who are sending *The Cheerful Letter* to these addresses make a note of this?

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be no meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange in June. The May meeting is the last of the season.

Will any one (living in a town where there is no free library and where books are desired) who is willing to take charge of a temporary library send her name to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.?

To Mrs. Mattie Y. Clark, Della Owen, and others. Your requests for books might have been inserted in the May number, had you sent them to the Book Club secretary, as directed in every number of *The Cheerful Letter*. Those who will not follow this simple rule, made for *their* benefit, cause inconvenience, not only to us, but to themselves.

Mr. Fred Yeal, East Machias, Maine, has received Vol. I. of a book, "Beauties and Wonders of Land and Sea." He has enjoyed it very much, and is anxious to obtain the second volume.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER
EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the

importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

Members are kindly requested to send odd numbers of periodicals directly to places where they are needed. Rev. B. C. Hammond, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, is always glad to receive them.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 373 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.